

July 14, 2004



just the **FACTs**

This fact sheet is provided as a reference to encourage a greater understanding of the various issues related to managing water in south Florida.

Harmony Ranch Permitting in Martin County

An applicant is seeking a District permit for a surface water management system to be used in Harmony Ranch, a proposed community of 212 single-family homes on 20-acre lots within 4,584 acres of agricultural land in Martin County. District Staff recommends approval of the permit.

- This would approve only the concept of the system being permitted and would not give the applicant permission to begin construction.
- The development will have no impact on the total 596 acres of wetlands located within the site. Those wetland areas are scattered throughout and the developer will incorporate each area into the community's large lots. This plan is in keeping with District goals because it protects and enhances all wetland areas as well as 302 acres surrounding uplands that serve as a buffer to the wetlands. These wetland and upland features will be maintained in perpetuity as conservation easements.
- Construction and other improvements will be limited to 1.5 acres within each 20-acre lot. Roads and other infrastructure will comprise 10 percent of the overall site. The developer has presented a proposal to manage the number of livestock on each lot as well as a proposal to store and properly dispose of animal waste.
- The Harmony Ranch site includes 1,800 acres that were previously being considered as a portion of the overall 117,200-acre Indian River Lagoon South Restoration Plan. The 1,800 acres fall within a proposed 17,143-acre natural water storage area that the District would use as a component of the plan. The Lagoon Restoration will not be compromised by the loss of these 1,800 acres, as other lands are available that will achieve the goals of the restoration. Land needed for the restoration is being obtained through voluntary acquisition.
- There are currently more than 154,000 acres of publicly-owned protected land in this region, which includes Martin County and northern Palm Beach County. Over 51 percent of the land needed for Everglades Restoration has been acquired to date.
- The land's real estate potential has caused its value to rise rapidly and estimates indicate the total cost could run between \$15,000 per acre and \$20,000 per acre by the time the District is prepared to acquire it. This represents a 300-percent to 400-percent increase over the District's estimated \$5,400-per-acre acquisition price.



Indian River Lagoon South Restoration Plan

Legend

- Reservoirs
- Stormwater Treatment Areas
- Natural Storage / Floodplain

Atlantic Ocean

Lake Okeechobee

0 2 4 8 Miles



Harmony

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